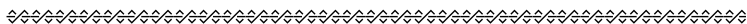


6. THE FUNERAL ORATION



INTRODUCTION

In 322 Hyperides was selected to deliver the funeral oration over the Athenian dead in the Lamian War. He was the natural choice: Demosthenes was still in exile; Demades, who had earlier been convicted of accepting bribes from Harpalus and later fined for proposing the deification of Alexander, was disenfranchised; and Phocion, who still advocated peace, had no credibility. Hyperides thus emerged not only as the leading politician in Athens but as a forceful advocate of resistance; he was also behind the choice of Leosthenes to lead that resistance against Macedon.

Leosthenes, who had served in Alexander's army in Asia as one of the commanders of the Greek mercenaries, organized the return of these mercenaries to Taenarum when they were disbanded. There he waited for his moment, which came with the death of Alexander in 323. With eight thousand mercenaries, financed by Harpalus' silver, he headed north and occupied Thermopylae, the pass into central Greece. Initially he met with success. He defeated the Macedonians in Boeotia, and when Antipater moved south into Thessaly, he scored a second victory and succeeded in shutting up Antipater in the mountain stronghold of Lamia, just north of Thermopylae. But the siege dragged on through the winter, and during the operations, Leosthenes was killed. His successor Antiphrilos was forced to lift the siege, but in the battle that followed, the Greeks were again victorious, and Antipater withdrew to Macedonia to await the help of his fellow Macedonian commander Craterus. Once he arrived, Antipater again descended in Thessaly, and in August of 322 at Crannon, he defeated the Greeks in the field. So ended the Athenian and Greek hopes of freedom.

In the spring of 322, before the defeat at Crannon, the Athenians

honored those who had died at Lamia with a public funeral. It was a long-standing tradition (see Thuc. 2.34.1), unique to Athens (Dem. 20.141), that a citizen of distinction would deliver an oration over the dead who had fallen in battle during the previous year. As a conventional form, the funeral oration had a set structure that included praise, consolation, and exhortation. The tribute to the dead often became a tribute to the glorious deeds of Athens' past, and in other examples of the genre (e.g., Lys. 2), the speaker would pass quickly over the actual events that occasioned his speech and dwell at length on Athens' heroic past or the glory of the city; such is the case in the best known example of the genre, Pericles' funeral oration (Thuc. 2.35–46).

Hyperides departs significantly from convention; though he praises the city (3–5) and consoles the living (41–43), he concentrates almost exclusively on recent events and in particular on Leosthenes. He will not recount in detail Athens' past accomplishments but will reserve his words for Leosthenes and his companions (6). Whatever mythological events (Troy) or Athenian heroes of the past (Miltiades, Themistocles, Harmodius and Aristogeiton) he does mention, redound not to the praise of Athens but to the praise of Leosthenes. These heroes will greet him with awe in Hades, a general who not only matched but even outdid their heroic exploits. The attention that Hyperides pays to Leosthenes and the others who died at Lamia adds a certain immediacy and sincerity to his words that cannot be found in other orations of this type (Kennedy 1963: 165). The sincerity was no doubt genuine; he was praising a friend and fellow compatriot who died in a cause he deeply believed in. It is no surprise that Hyperides' funeral oration was highly regarded in antiquity.

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6. THE FUNERAL ORATION

[1] The words to be delivered over this grave, declaring the bravery of the general Leosthenes and the other men who have died with him in the war, have as witness time itself, which preserves a record of their

deeds to their glory. For no man we know or <have heard about> in all of history has ever seen resolve more noble than this or men more courageous than those who have died or deeds more magnificent. [2] For this reason, what I fear most today is that my speech will fail to measure up to their deeds. However, I do take heart again in this thought, that what I leave out you who hear me will supply, for my words will not be addressed to a random crowd but to men who witnessed their deeds.

[3] Our city deserves praise for the policy it chose, a policy that matched and even surpassed the proud and noble deeds it accomplished in the past; those who have died also deserve praise for their bravery in battle, bravery that did not disgrace the valor of their ancestors; and finally the general Leosthenes deserves praise on both counts, for he led the city to adopt the policy and was appointed commander of our citizens for the expedition.

[4] As for our city, I will not recount in detail every previous benefit that it has bestowed on all of Greece; I do not have enough time. This is not the appropriate moment to make a long speech, and it would not be easy for one man to go through and remember so many great deeds. But I will not hesitate to summarize its main accomplishments.

[5] As the sun covers the whole of the inhabited earth, dividing the seasons appropriately, setting everything in harmonious order and looking after men who are wise and good, providing for their birth and upbringing, for the fruits of their labor and for all the other necessities of life, so too does our city never fail to punish the wicked, help the just, <dispense> equality to all in place of injustice, and at its own personal <risk> and expense ensure the <common security> of Greece.

[6] As I said before, I will leave untold the collective deeds of our city and direct my words to the feats of Leosthenes and his companions. So, where should I begin, and what should I mention first? Should I trace the ancestry of each man? I suspect that would be foolish. [7] If one is praising different men who have come together from many different places to live in one city, each contributing his own lineage, one has to trace the separate ancestry of each man. But if he is speaking of Athenians who are indigenous to the land and share a common ancestry of unsurpassed nobility, it is superfluous, I think, to praise the ancestry of each man. [8] Well, should I mention their education and

how as children they were reared and educated with strict discipline,¹ as some usually do? But I think you all know that we educate our children in order to make them brave men, and it is obvious that men who showed exceptional courage in the war were well educated as children. [9] So I think, the simplest thing is to recount their courage in battle and show how many benefits they have bestowed on their country and the rest of Greece. I will begin first with the general, as I should.

[10] Leosthenes saw that all of Greece was on its knees and seemed to be cowering, corrupted by men who were bribed by Philip and Alexander to work against their own countries. He realized that our city needed a man, just as Greece needed a city, that could assume leadership, so he gave himself to his country and his city to Greece for the sake of freedom. [11] He raised a mercenary force, took command of the Athenian army, and in a battle in Boeotia defeated those who from the beginning opposed Greek freedom, the Boeotians, the Macedonians, the Euboeans, and their allies. [12] From there he reached Thermopylae² and occupied the pass through which the barbarians once marched to attack the Greeks. He checked Antipater's advance into Greece and, surprising him in that area, defeated him in battle, forced him to take refuge in Lamia,³ and began a siege of the city. [13] He made allies of the Thessalians, the Phocians, the Aetolians, and all the others in the region. Philip and Alexander prided themselves in commanding men who were unwilling to serve; Leosthenes took command of the same men, who were ready and willing. He managed to accomplished the goals he set for himself, but he could not overcome fate. [14] It is right to express our gratitude to Leosthenes first and foremost for the deeds he achieved in his lifetime but also for the battle that was fought after his death and for all the

¹ The term here is *sōphrosunē*, which carried the idea of both discipline, essential for a good soldier, and moderation, essential for a good citizen.

² Thermopylae ("the Gates") was the pass from Thessaly into Locris north of Boeotia. It was here in 480 that the Spartans under the command of Leonidas bravely but futilely resisted the Persian advance led by Xerxes. See Herod. 7.201–222.

³ Lamia lay in Thessaly, some twenty kilometers (about twelve miles) north of Thermopylae.

other benefits the Greeks derived from that campaign. For it is on the foundations laid by Leosthenes that men today build their future successes.

[15] Let no one think I am not saying anything about the other citizens and praising only Leosthenes. In fact, to praise Leosthenes for these battles is also to pay tribute to the rest of the citizens. A general may be responsible for a well-devised strategy, but victory in battle depends on those willing to risk their lives. So when I praise the victory we won, I am praising both Leosthenes' leadership and the bravery of the others at the same time. [16] For who would not have good reason to praise those citizens who died in this war, who gave their lives for the sake of Greek freedom, and who believed that the clearest proof of their desire to preserve freedom for Greece was to die fighting on its behalf?

[17] An important event that contributed to their eagerness to fight for Greece was the battle that took place earlier in Boeotia. They saw that the city of Thebes had been wretchedly destroyed into oblivion, the acropolis garrisoned by Macedonians, the inhabitants reduced to slavery, and their land parceled out to others.⁴ These terrible sights that they saw with their own eyes gave them an undaunted courage to face danger readily. [18] But the battle that took place near Thermopylae and Lamia has proven no less glorious for them than when they fought in Boeotia, not only because they defeated Antipater and his allies in battle but also because the battle was located there. For all the Greeks who gather twice a year for the Amphictyonic Council⁵ will see the deeds they accomplished, and as soon as they gather at that spot, they will recall their courage. [19] Never did men fight for a more noble prize against stronger enemies with fewer allies. They believed there was strength in courage and superiority in bravery, not in a large number of bodies. They secured freedom for all Greece to share in,

⁴Thebes was destroyed by Alexander in 335.

⁵The various ethnic groups of Greece (Ionians, Dorians, Phocians, etc.) sent representatives to the Amphictyonic Council, which was in charge of the oracle at Delphi, the Pythian games, the finances of the sanctuary, and the maintenance of the temple. Once a year it met at Anthela near Thermopylae; the other time, in Delphi, which was some thirty kilometers (about eighteen miles) south of Thermopylae.

but the glory of their deeds is a crown they won for our country alone.

[20] Now then, it is worth considering, what do we think would have happened, if these men had not fought as duty required? Would not the whole inhabited world be subject to a single master? And would not Greece be forced to regard his capricious behavior as law? In short, Macedonian arrogance and not the power of justice would prevail among all people; no woman, no girl, no child would be safe from the endless violations forced on each and every one of them. [21] That is clear from what we have been forced to endure up to now: sacrifices are made to men, and while statues, altars, and temples to the gods are neglected, those to men are carefully cultivated.⁶ We ourselves are forced to honor their slaves as heroes.⁷ [22] When respect for the gods has been destroyed by Macedonian arrogance, what can we expect would have happened to human respect? Would it not have been utterly destroyed? The more frightening we think the consequences would have been, the greater, we must realize, is the praise those who have died deserve.

[23] No campaign displayed the courage of its soldiers more than this last one. Daily they were forced to prepare for battle, to fight more engagements on a single campaign than the blows all other soldiers have endured in the past, to withstand with such resolve the extremes of winter and the lack of daily necessities that were so great and so severe that it is difficult to describe in words. [24] Such were the hardships that Leosthenes urged his fellow citizens to endure without flinching, and they themselves readily offered to fight alongside such a great general. Should we not consider it their good fortune that they displayed their courage rather than their bad fortune that they lost their lives? For the price of their mortal bodies they gained immortal glory, and by their personal courage they secured universal freedom

⁶Alexander had demanded divine honors for himself. See 5.31 and Din. 1.94.

⁷Hephaestion, a Macedonian noble who had been Alexander's closest friend, suddenly died in 324. Alexander staged an extravagant funeral in honor of his friend and decreed at the end that all should worship him as a god. Apparently, heroic cults were established by his command both in the East and in Athens. See Diodorus Siculus 17.115.6.

for the Greeks. [25] There cannot be complete happiness without independence. For men to be happy they must be ruled by the voice of law, not the threats of a man; free men must not be frightened by accusation, only by proof of guilt; and the safety of our citizens must not depend on men who flatter their masters and slander our citizens but on our confidence in the law. [26] To defend all of this, these men endured toil upon toil; and by facing dangers daily, they removed for all time the fears that gripped our citizens and the Greeks. They gave their lives so others could live well.

[27] Thanks to them, their fathers are honored, their mothers are admired by the citizens, their sisters have found and will find legitimate marriages worthy of them, and their children will find that their courage provides access to the goodwill of the people. Indeed, they have not really died, for it is not right to call it "death" when they have given their lives for such a noble cause but have just exchanged this life for an eternal post. [28] If death, which is so distressing to others, has been the source of great benefits for them, it is surely right to consider them fortunate, for they have not left life, but rather they have been born again, in a birth more noble than the first. [29] Then, they were just senseless children, but now, they have been born as courageous men. Then, it was only after the long passage of time and in the face of many dangers that they revealed their courage, but now, owing to this new birth, they can quickly become well known to all and renown for their bravery.

[30] Is there any time that is not right to remember their valor? Is there any place where we will not see them receive the highest honor and praise? What about when the city prospers? Will the benefits we received because of these men bring praise and renown to anyone else but them? What about in times of personal successes? Only their courage will allow us to enjoy our successes securely. [31] What generation will not regard them as most blessed? Our elders? Certainly, for they will realize that the rest of their lives will be happy and free of fear because of these men. Their peers? Certainly, since their death has instilled a noble desire to emulate men who achieved through their own courage a fame that is by far the most distinguished. [32] The younger men and the boys? Surely they will envy their death and be eager to imitate them. If they have left these men their courage as an example for their own lives, must we not acknowledge that they have

achieved immortal fame? [33] What <poets and philosophers will lack words or songs to celebrate their deeds to> the Greeks? Who will not praise this expedition even more than the one that conquered the Phrygians?⁸ Where in Greece will they ever stop commemorating their exploits in word and song for future generations? [34] On two counts they should praise Leosthenes and those who died in the war. If men take pleasure in recalling such displays of courage, what could bring more pleasure to the Greeks than praising those who won them their freedom from the Macedonians? If, on the other hand, the aim of such recollections is profit, what speech could profit the hearts of its listeners more than the praise of courage and courageous men?

[35] That they should be honored by us and by all others is perfectly clear from what I have said. But it is also worth considering who will be in Hades to greet the leader of these men? Can you not imagine that we would see the so-called demigods, those who sailed to Troy, greeting Leosthenes and looking on him with wonder? Though he performed the same kind of deeds as they, he far surpassed them; for with the help of all Greece they took one city, while he with only his country to help⁹ humbled completely the power that controlled Europe and Asia. [36] They fought for one violated woman, but he, with the help of these men now buried by his side, prevented the violation that threatened all Greek women. [37] There were also those born after the famous heroes of Troy whose exploits matched their courage: I mean Miltiades and Themistocles¹⁰ and their companions, and others who liberated Greece, and brought honor to their country and glory to their lives. [38] Leosthenes so surpassed these in courage and foresight that he actually prevented the invasion of a barbarian force, whereas they only defended against it. They saw the enemy fighting in their country, whereas he defeated the enemy in its own territory.

⁸That is, the expedition to Troy celebrated by Homer.

⁹Hyperides fails to mention the foreign mercenaries Leosthenes had in his army (see 6.11).

¹⁰Miltiades was the Athenian general credited with defeating the Persian army at Marathon in 490. In 480 Themistocles, by threatening to withdraw the Athenian fleet, convinced the other Greek commanders to stand and face the Persian navy in the narrows of Salamis; the Greek victory that followed led to Xerxes' withdrawal from Greece. See Herod. 6.108–117, 8.70–97.

[39] I think even these men who demonstrated to the people most clearly their friendship for one another, I mean Harmodius and Aristogeiton,¹¹ would agree that none are so nearly at the same level as Leosthenes and his companions in arms; nor is there anyone with whom they would rather associate in Hades than with these men. Quite rightly. For the exploits of these men were not inferior to theirs, but if we need say it, even greater. They deposed the tyrants in their own country, whereas these men deposed the tyrants of all Greece.

[40] How noble and incredible was the courage shown by these men here; how glorious and magnificent the choice they made; how surpassing the valor and bravery in the face of dangers that they displayed for the collective freedom of the Greeks . . .¹²

[41] Perhaps it is difficult to console those who are overwhelmed by such grief as this. Sorrows are not soothed by words and law, but each one's nature and feelings of affection for the deceased set the limit to his grief. Nonetheless we must take heart, restrict our grief to what is acceptable, and remember not only the death of those who are gone but also the example of courage they have left us. [42] Though their suffering deserves mourning, their exploits deserve great praise. Though they will not reach old age in their mortal lives, still they have won a fame that is ageless and are counted blessed in every way. For those who have died childless, the praises of the Greeks will be their immortal children. For those who left behind children, the goodwill of their country will become their children's guardian. [43] Moreover, if death is like not existing, they are free from sickness and grief and everything else that besets human life. But if we are conscious in Hades and come under the care of some deity, as we believe, it is probable that those who defended the honors of the gods that were threatened with destruction will receive the fullest care and attention from the deity¹³ . . .

¹¹ See 2.3n.

¹² The papyrus ends here. The epilogue (41–43) given below is preserved only by the late author Stobaeus.

¹³ There is a clear echo of Plato's *Apology* 40c–41d here.